

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 31, 2008. Claims 1 to 66 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 6, 15, 17, 29 to 31, 36, 45, 47 and 59 to 66 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 5, 31 to 35 and 61 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over U.S. Patent No. 5,754,857 (Gadol) in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,069,234 (Cornelius), and Claims 6 to 30, 36 to 60, and 62 to 66 were rejected over 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Gadol in view of Cornelius and further in view of eFlow article (March 2000). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Referring specifically to claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to an information processing apparatus. The apparatus includes receiving means for receiving an approval service object which includes a decision condition set by a user of an approval service provider, storage means for storing the approval service object received by the receiving means, approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the information processing apparatus, decision means for deciding, in the information processing apparatus, which is different from the approval service provider, whether or not to approve the prepared approval request, based on the decision condition included in the stored approval service object, and output means for outputting a result of the decision of the decision means.

Claims 31 and 61 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the apparatus of Claim 1.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 1, 31 and 61, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of deciding, in an information processing apparatus, which is different from an approval service provider, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, based on a decision condition included in a stored approval service object.

In this regard, Gadol is seen to disclose a system and method for automating a workflow by distributing tasks required for execution of the workflow over servers and clients connected on a network. Once a workflow initiated by a user has been initiated by a database server, stages of the workflow can be executed on respective network clients without further interaction with the server by using a workflow courier. After each stage is executed, the client executing that stage updates the workflow courier and transmits the updated workflow courier to a client having an associated user who is authorized to perform a next step in the workflow (e.g., approval of a request). (See Abstract and Column 3, lines 10 to 20 of Gadol). For example, a client may send a completed form (e.g., an approval form for a request) via the courier workflow to another client who is authorized to perform a next stage of the workflow (e.g., approval of the request). (See, e.g., Column 1, lines 25 to 65 and Column 3, lines 28 to 40 of Gadol). Thus, Gadol is seen to disclose that an approval of a request is performed on a client of a user authorized to perform a next stage of the workflow which is the approval process. That is, in Gadol, the

approval process is performed on an apparatus of the user authorized to perform a next stage of the workflow (i.e., the approval service provider). In contrast, in the invention of Claims 1, 31 and 61, a decision is made, in an information processing apparatus, which is different from an approval service provider, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, based on a decision condition included in a stored approval service object.

Cornelius is not seen to remedy the above-noted deficiencies of Gadol. In this regard, Cornelius is merely seen to disclose general object oriented programming technologies. (See, e.g., Column 13, line 5 to Column 14, line 65 of Cornelius). However, Cornelius is not seen to add anything that, when combined with Gadol would have resulted in at least the features of deciding, in an information processing apparatus, which is different from an approval service provider, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, based on a decision condition included in a stored approval service object.

The remaining applied reference, namely the eFlow article, is not seen to cure the deficiencies of Gadol and Cornelius. In this regard, the eFlow article is merely seen to disclose a platform that supports specification, deployment, and management of composite e-services. However, the eFlow article is not seen to add anything that, when combined with Gadol and/or Cornelius, would have resulted in at least the features of deciding, in an information processing apparatus, which is different from an approval service provider, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, based on a decision condition included in a stored approval service object.

Accordingly, Claims 1, 31 and 61 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Amended independent Claim 6 is directed to an approval system. The approval system includes a service server for managing plural approval service objects registered by an approval service provider and a client terminal having approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the client terminal. The client terminal further includes acquisition means for searching for and acquiring an approval service object matching the approval request, among the plural approval service objects registered in the service server, wherein the approval service object includes a decision condition set by a user of the approval service provider. The client terminal also includes decision performing means for performing, in the client terminal, which is different from the approval service provider, the approval decision for the approval request based on the decision condition included in the acquired approval service object, and output means for outputting a result of the decision of the decision performing means.

Claims 36 and 62 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 6.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 6, 36 and 62, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of performing, in a client terminal, which is different from an approval service provider, an approval decision for an approval request based on a decision condition included in an acquired approval service object.

As discussed above, none of Gadol, Cornelius and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose the features of deciding, in an

information processing apparatus, which is different from an approval service provider, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, based on a decision condition included in a stored approval service object. For substantially the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claims 1, 31 and 61, none of Gadol, Cornelius and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose the features of performing, in a client terminal, which is different from an approval service provider, an approval decision for an approval request based on a decision condition included in an acquired approval service object.

Accordingly, Claims 6, 36 and 62 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Amended independent Claim 15 is directed to a service server. The service server includes approval service storage means for storing plural approval service objects instructed for registration by an approval service provider, wherein each of the approval service objects includes a decision condition set by a user of the approval service provider. The service server also includes search and transmission means for searching for an approval service object which matches an approval request based on a search instruction received from an external apparatus, and transmitting the approval service object located by the search to the external apparatus. The external apparatus decides, in the external apparatus, which is different from the approval service provider, whether or not to approve the approval request based on the decision condition included in the transmitted approval service object. The approval request is prepared based on values entered by a user.

Claims 45 and 63 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the server of Claim 15.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 15, 45 and 63, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of an external apparatus deciding, in the external apparatus, which is different from an approval service provider, whether or not to approve an approval request based on a decision condition included in a transmitted approval service object.

As discussed above, none of Gadol, Cornelius and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose the features of deciding, in an information processing apparatus, which is different from an approval service provider, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, based on a decision condition included in a stored approval service object. For substantially the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claims 1, 31 and 61, none of Gadol, Cornelius and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose the features of an external apparatus deciding, in the external apparatus, which is different from an approval service provider, whether or not to approve an approval request based on a decision condition included in a transmitted approval service object.

Accordingly, Claims 15, 45 and 63 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Amended independent Claim 17 is directed to an approval system including a service server, a client terminal and a request server. The service server manages plural

approval service objects registered by an approval service provider, wherein each of the approval service objects includes a decision condition set by a user of an approval service provider. The client terminal includes approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the client terminal. The request server includes approval request storage means for storing the approval request prepared in the client terminal, acquisition means for searching for and acquiring an approval service object matching the approval request stored in the approval request storage means, among the plural approval service objects registered in the service server, decision performing means for performing, in the request server, which is different from the approval service provider, the approval decision for the approval request, based on the decision condition included in the acquired approval service object, and output means for outputting a result of the decision of the decision performing means.

Claims 47 and 64 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 17.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 17, 47 and 64, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of performing, in a request server, which is different from an approval service provider, an approval decision for an approval request, based on a decision condition included in an acquired approval service object.

As discussed above, none of Gadol, Cornelius and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose the features of deciding, in an information processing apparatus, which is different from an approval service provider,

whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, based on a decision condition included in a stored approval service object. For substantially the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claims 1, 31 and 61, none of Gadol, Cornelius and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose the features of performing, in a request server, which is different from an approval service provider, an approval decision for an approval request, based on a decision condition included in an acquired approval service object.

Accordingly, Claims 17, 47 and 64 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Amended independent Claim 29 is directed to an approval system including a service server and a client terminal. The service server manages plural approval service objects registered by an approval service provider, and each of the approval service objects includes a decision condition set by a user of an approval service provider. The client terminal includes approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the client terminal, search means for searching for an approval service object matching the approval request, among the plural approval service objects registered in the service server, transmission means for transmitting the approval request to the service server, in the case that the approval service object is located by the search means, and reception means for receiving the result of approval decision for the approval request transmitted from the service server. The service server includes decision performing means for performing, in the service server, which is different from the approval service provider, the approval decision for the approval request transmitted from

the client terminal, based on the decision condition included in the approval service object matching the approval request, and transmission means for transmitting a result of the approval decision to the client terminal.

Claims 59 and 65 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 29.

Amended independent Claim 30 is directed to an approval system including a service server, a client terminal and a request server. The service server manages plural approval service objects registered by an approval service provider, and each of the approval service objects includes a decision condition set by a user of an approval service provider. The client terminal includes approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the client terminal. The request server includes approval request storage means for storing the approval request prepared in the client terminal. The request server further includes approval request storage means for storing the approval request prepared in the client terminal, search means for searching for an approval service object matching the approval request stored in the approval request storage means, among the plural approval service objects registered in the service server, transmission means for transmitting the approval service object to the service server, in the case that the approval service object is located by the search means, and reception means for receiving the result of approval decision for the approval request from the service server. The service server includes decision performing means for performing, in the service server, which is different from the approval service provider, the approval decision for the approval request transmitted from the request server, based on the decision

condition included in the approval service object matching the approval request, and transmission means for transmitting a result of the approval decision to the request server.

Claims 60 and 66 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 30.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 29, 30, 59, 60, 65 and 66, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of performing, in a service server, which is different from an approval service provider, an approval decision for an approval request transmitted from a client terminal (Claims 29, 59 and 65) or request server (Claims 30, 60 and 66), based on a decision condition included in an approval service object matching an approval request.

As discussed above, none of Gadol, Cornelius and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose the features of deciding, in an information processing apparatus, which is different from an approval service provider, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, based on a decision condition included in a stored approval service object. For substantially the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claims 1, 31 and 61, none of Gadol, Cornelius and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose the features of performing, in a service server, which is different from an approval service provider, an approval decision for an approval request transmitted from a client terminal (Claims 29, 59 and 65) or request server (Claims 30, 60 and 66), based on a decision condition included in an approval service object matching an approval request.

Accordingly, Claims 29, 30, 59, 60, 65 and 66 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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